

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 AID-05 IO-13 EUR-12 SAM-01

OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /107 W

----- 048435

R 131426Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2375

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 2601

DEPT: PLEASE PASS AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POST AS APPROPRIATE

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJ: UGTT LEADER ACHOUR COMMENTS ON OATUU CONGRESS IN
TRIPOLI

REF : TUNIS 2384, BAMAKO 1195, CASABLANCA 406

1. IT APPEARS THAT GENERAL UNION OF TUNISIAN WORKERS (UGTT)
CALL FOR CANCELLATION OF OATUU CONGRESS IN TRIPOLI RECEIVED
LITTLE POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM AFRICAN TRADE UNION ORGAN-
IZATIONS. UGTT SOURCES HAVE INDICATED THAT NO TRADE UNION
ORGANIZATION HAS SAID IT WOULD REFUSE TO ATTEND THE
CONGRESS.

2. UGTT LEADER HABIB ACHOUR TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE WAS
DISAPPOINTED BY THIS RESPONSE. IN AN EMOTIONAL REACTION HE
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SAID THAT "QADHAFI PAYS MORE MONEY THAN THE AMERICANS,"

IMPLYING THAT AFRICAN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN COOPTED BY THE LIBYANS, ARE AT QADHAFI'S CALL, AND DO NOT HAVE THE FREEDOM TO ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE TRADE UNION MANNER. HE RE-EMPHASIZED THE DISREGARD OF LIBYAN AUTHORITIES FOR FREE TRADE UNION RIGHTS AND DECLARED THAT AFRICAN TRADE UNIONISTS HAVE ALIGNED THEMSELVES AGAINST THE TRUE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS. DEVELOPING HIS THEME, ACHOUR SAID THAT THE REAL PROBLEM IS THE FAILURE OF THE UNITED STATES TO ACHIEVE A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. AS LONG AS ISRAEL REFUSES TO LEAVE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, HE ASSERTED, RADICALS LIKE QADHAFI HAVE BURNING ISSUES WHICH THEY CAN USE TO WIN ADHERENTS. REAFFIRMING HIS DECISION NOT TO ATTEND TRIPOLI CONGRESS, ACHOUR SAID THAT "IF WE GO THERE QADHAFI WILL THROW US IN JAIL."

3. ON QUESTION OF ICFTU AFFILIATION RAISED IN BAMAKO 1195, ACHOUR SAID THAT TRIPOLI CONGRESS WILL DISCUSS THIS ISSUE AND HE SURMISED THAT IT WILL CALL FOR SEVERING OF TIES. WE DO NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT ACHOUR SHIED AWAY FROM TRIPOLI CONGRESS IN ORDER TO AVOID CONFRONTATION OVER UGTT'S AFFILIATION WITH ICFTU. THE ONLY ASPECT OF ICFTU TIE THAT ACHOUR CONSIDERS POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING FOR HIM IS AFFILIATION OF ISRAELI HISTADRUT WITH ICFTU. HE HAS LONG DEFENDED UGTT AFFILIATION AS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONISTS AND HE CLAIMS TO HAVE ACHIEVED BREAKTHROUGHTS IN THIS REGARD. WE DOUBT THAT HE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO DEFEND HIMSELF ON THIS POINT AND WOULD NORMALLY WELCOME OPPORTUNITY OFFERED BY TRIPOLI CONGRESS.

4. CASABLANCA REFTEL RECEIVED AFTER TALK WITH ACHOUR WHO VOLUNTEERED NOTHING ABOUT UMT SUPPORT FOR UGTT POSITION.

5. DURING CONVERSATION WITH ACHOUR, HE SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED LONG LETTER FROM AFL-CIO PRESIDENT MEANY ON THE ILO. DOES THE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON CONTENTS OF MEANY LETTER THAT IT CAN SHARE WITH POSTS?
KING

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED
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